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THE NEW YORK LATIN LEAFLET

Entered at the Post Office in Brooklyn as second-class matter, October 29, 1900

25 Issues
One-half of
Every Subscription
goes into the
Scholarship Fund

VOL VII

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, MARCH 4, 1907

No 167

THE CLASSICAL CONFERENCE OF 1906 IN PHILADELPHIA

In Four Parts—Part III

He must also know the general principles of syntax, but here the instruction should be practical and should aim to give the ability to translate. It is a waste of time and effort to discuss the question whether a given ablative is one of cause, of manner or of means, when the meaning of the sentence is perfectly clear. Whether, for example, *lingua*, in the sentence, *qui ipsorum lingua Celtæ appellantur* (Caes B G I 1), is an ablative of means, with some editions, or an ablative of accordance, with others, or neither of these, when the meaning obviously is "who are called in their own language Celts", is unimportant. Equally fruitless is the attempt to classify all the uses of the genitive limiting a noun, whose numerous varieties and shades of meaning might puzzle an expert in syntactical analysis. There are plenty of instances of the various uses of the cases and of the moods and tenses which are typical and unmistakable, without wrestling with the difficulties of those which lie on the border-line of categories which shade into one another by almost imperceptible gradations, and which were quite unknown to the Romans themselves.

It is important to know, and to have the knowledge available for everyday use, that if *ut* is followed by a subjunctive it is likely to mean "that" or "so that", but that if it is followed by an indicative, it probably means "when" or "as"; that a form which may be either dative or ablative is determined to be one or the other by the form of the sentence in which it stands. In other words, his knowledge of syntax should enable the student to make his way through the tangle of a difficult sentence; not to give names to the uses of the cases and of the moods and tenses. I believe in reading a sentence in Latin slowly and thoughtfully, breaking it up into sense divisions, noting the relations of the words which compose it and the changes in one's point of view which come about as the reading progresses. If this were done more frequently, students would not always translate *quod* by "because", without even considering the possibility that it might be the neuter of a relative pronoun, or translate *cum* "with", if it happens to be followed by an ablative, without waiting to see whether it may not after all be the conjunction. The Latin writers, who unfortunately did not in all cases anticipate that their works were to be used as text-books, and in no case thought of the possibility of their being so used by English-speaking boys, are not always careful to avoid ambiguity. In Caes B G I 20 5 *haec cum pluribus verbis flets a Caesare peteret*, a student might be

pardoned for at first taking *cum* as a preposition, especially since *multis cum lacrimis* has occurred just before, but he ought instantly to change his mind when he reaches *peteret*.

There are some most elementary principles, of great importance in translating Latin, which are, or seem to be, unknown to the students who have acquired considerable facility in using such catch phrases as "ablative of means", "sequence of tenses", and the like. For example that the conjunction *cum* does not always stand at the beginning of its clause, that a relative at the beginning of a sentence is often best translated by a demonstrative with a conjunction, that *Sicilia Sardiniaque amissae* means "the loss of Sicily and Sardinia", and many others which seem too elementary to deserve notice, but are none the less stumbling-blocks even after the student has entered college.

The precise origin of the subjunctive with *dum* or with *priusquam* is of little interest or value to the school-boy, but it is important for him to know that the former contains an idea of expectancy or purpose, and that the latter indicates that an act is anticipated and prevented, or for some reason represents merely a thought, not an actual occurrence.

The practical application of such knowledge is to translation, and it is best acquired by the writing of Latin. For this reason I heartily agree with Mr. Dodge (*Leaflet* Nov 19, 1906) that more time should be given to the writing of Latin, rather than less. The extra time given to the subject could easily be saved by less attention to the grammar in connection with the translation. This year Professor McDaniel and I are trying the experiment of devoting two of our three hours in freshman Latin almost exclusively to reading and translation, relegating the discussion of grammatical constructions to the third hour, during which Dr. Kent teaches them to write Latin. It is too early yet to say what the result of the experiment will be, but we are certainly reading more than we have done in previous years, and I shall be greatly surprised if the students know less about grammar than usual. We hope that they will know more.

I am afraid that the course which I have attempted to outline in these rambling remarks will not be regarded as in the least ideal. That the ideal course in the minds of many would be one in which the teacher equipped with lantern and slides, with photographs, models and maps, with chalk of divers colors, should read seven books of Caesar in the second year, with no attention to mere grammatical details; should lead his students to see Caesar's purpose in writing the Commentaries; should discuss his accuracy and reliability as an historian, the

ethnology, geography and customs of Gaul; should show him the battle-fields of Caesar and analyze his campaigns; should give him an idea of the equipment and arrangement of the Roman army in the field and on the march, of the pay and diet of the soldiers, of their method of fortifying a camp and of attacking fortified places; and should follow the same "higher lines" *mutatis mutandis* through nine or ten orations of Cicero and twelve books of the Aeneid. A most excellent program truly, if it can be carried out, and at the same time the student can be taught to read Latin. By the unusually skilful teacher, with an unusually bright class, it may be carried out in part. Under ordinary circumstances, the part must be small. The student must, of course, get some idea of ancient history and geography and of mythology, as well as of the meaning of such terms as *consul*, *imperator*, *tribunus*, and the like, but the enthusiastic teacher must constantly ask himself "What am I aiming at, and how much can I expect boys from thirteen to eighteen to learn and to be interested in?" To us many of these things are commonplaces, but they have become so by long years of study and by the acquirement of maturity. Not all of them are equally familiar even to graduate students, and these find three years all too short a time to get a general knowledge of the subject of classical philology. The graduate student has a college course behind him and back of that his secondary school work. The last is the foundation of a structure built slowly and with infinite pains. If the foundation be weak, it must sometime be strengthened, with consequent loss of time and effort. It may be that the foundation is to be used for another purpose, but it is nevertheless a foundation. No building can be begun at the top or in the middle, nor can good results be attained by doing a little work on the foundations and a little on the superstructure at the same time. A reading knowledge of Latin is recognized as a good foundation for many professions and for scholarship in various lines. To attempt to make classical philologists of school-boys, to do in four years what can be done with difficulty in ten, will inevitably result in failure to accomplish this end, as well as in a failure to lay a solid foundation for later work. It is more interesting to lead an orchestra or to compose a symphony than to practice finger-exercises, but each has its place in the training of a musician, and the great majority never reach the last stage. The graduate student enjoys his work more than the school-boy does his wrestle with the elements of Latin, but they cannot exchange work. A well-equipped teacher in a secondary school would probably find it more interesting to instruct college students or graduates, but he may console himself with the thought that his work is of the greatest possible importance. The better his equipment, the better he will do this work, as a rule, and the more he will enjoy doing it; but he must remember the days when he himself was a school-boy and bear in mind what he most needed to learn at that time.

CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE MIDDLE STATES AND MARYLAND

In pursuance of a call previously issued, a meeting of classical teachers and others interested in classical studies was held in Philadelphia, on November 30, 1906, which resulted in the formation of the Classical Association of the Middle States and Maryland. By direction of the meeting a committee of five was appointed, to serve as a preliminary committee of arrangements, to make preparations for a meeting of the Association in 1907, and to serve until officers should be elected at that meeting.

The committee of five was as follows: Mr A L Hodges of the Wadleigh High School, New York; Mr Emery W Given of the Newark Academy, Professor John C Rolfe of the University of Pennsylvania, Professor George P Bristol of Cornell University, and Professor Charles Knapp of Barnard College. Later, Professor Kirby Smith of John Hopkins University was added to the committee. This committee subsequently met and organized with Mr Hodges as chairman and Professor Knapp as secretary. Arrangements have been made for a meeting of the Association, at Columbia University, on Friday and Saturday, April 26, 27. Substantial progress has been made in the arrangement of the programme for this meeting; details will be announced in a later number of *The Leaflet*.

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